



ASK EPA!!

Questions and Answers
about Asbestos and EPA's Investigation

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Q: My home was sampled two years ago, so why am I not on EPA's "priority list" for cleanup?"

A: EPA sampled many homes in Libby beginning in 1999. Many homes found to have asbestos contamination are not being cleaned up immediately. EPA must continue to clean up properties based on two primary factors: 1. Conditions and 2. Location, not on sample order.

Additionally, due to snow and mud, EPA cannot clean up residential yards during the winter season. During winter EPA will focus on cleaning properties needing *only* indoor cleanup. Since the soil is clean at these properties, PEA will not have to return to do outdoor cleanups during summer.

The properties that are on the "priority list" were chosen because they presented higher risk than other properties that were screened or sampled. It remains EPA's intention to clean up all the properties in Libby with vermiculite insulation over the next three years. All contaminated properties are, in fact, priorities.

1. Conditions at the property based on sample results and visual inspections.

Homes will be generally prioritized using these criteria:

- high ✓ multiple sources of Libby asbestos and high levels detected
- ✓ single source of Libby asbestos and high levels detected
- ✓ potential for immediate contact with Zonolite
- ✓ home sale pending on home with Zonolite or low levels detected
- low ✓ Zonolite present only

2. Location of the property.

At times, homes with conditions dictating a lower priority may get cleaned up faster because it's near a higher priority home. This will cut cleanup time and is the only way EPA can clean so many properties in just a few years.

EPA will develop a general priority list in the winter 2002/2003 once it is clear how many properties will need further investigation and/or cleanup. This will give home and business owners a general idea of whether their property is scheduled to be cleaned in five months or in two years.

Read next week's Q&A for reminders on how to protect yourself from possible exposure if your property is not scheduled to be cleaned for two years.

For more information call:

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